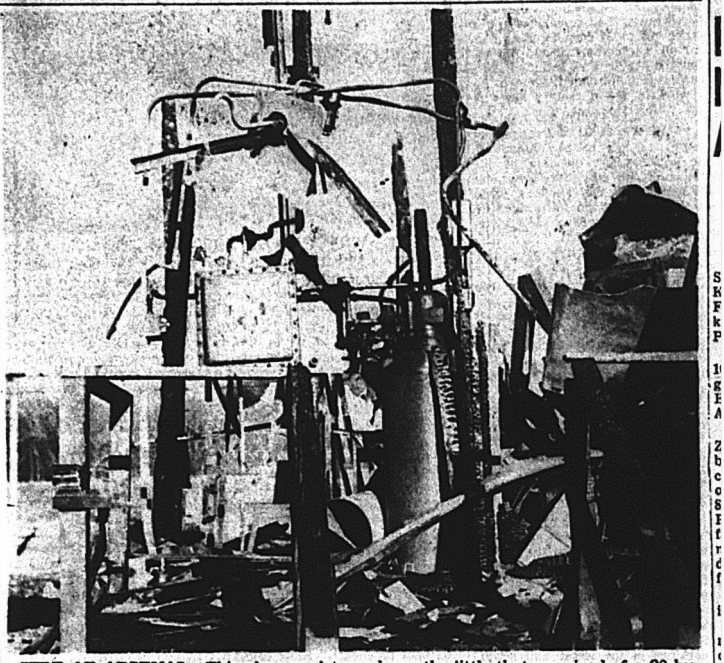

FIRE AT ARSENAL—This closeup picture shows the little that remained of a 20 by 30 foot size building at Kankakee unit of Joliet Arsenal, destroyed by a fire yesterday afternoon, in which one man was burned to death. Five other workers fled to safety. However, there was no explosion reported. Origin of the fire is undetermined. A board of inquiry today continued investigation into the blaze. (Joliet Arsenal photo.)

Probe Arsenal Fire

Ex-Decatur Man Killed; Five Escape

Charred ruins of a building entirely consumed by flames yesterday afternoon at the Kankakee unit of Joliet Arsenal were being sifted today for possible clews to the cause of the fire in which one man was burned to death.

Arsenal officials said they presumed that the body found in the smouldering ruins late yesterday afternoon is that of Everett Dudley Lee, 46, of Coal City, and formerly from Decatur.

Approximately 4,500 pounds of tetryl, an explosive component, was in the building, being packed for shipping when the fire broke out, Arsenal officials reported. All the tetryl was destroyed by the fire.

Lee, who had been employed at the Arsenal less than three weeks, was one of six workers in the building when the fire broke out at 1:30 p. m. The other five men fled to safety. The body found in the debris was so badly burned that there was no means of identifying it, Arsenal officials said.

A THREE-MAN board of investigation today continued to probe for cause of the blaze. Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation also are at the Arsenal making an investigation.

According to his co-workers, Lee was on the second floor of the small 20 by 30 feet frame and composition construction building, known as a tetryl pack house. From where the body was found in the ruins, it was apparent that the man who died was not too far away from either of two escape chutes in the building, Arsenal officials told Coroner Willard A. Blood, who is also investigating the death.

THERE WAS NO explosion preceding the fire, the Arsenal authorities reported. The building is part of the operations of the U. S. Rubber Co., operating contractor for the Kankakee unit. Both the company and U. S. Army personnel are making a complete investigation.

No other buildings were endangered by the fire, some 400 feet from any other structure on the grounds, it was reported.

The tetryl in the building was packed in boxes holding 50 pounds each, and readied for shipment elsewhere for use as a component in ammunition. Tetryl, while an explosive in itself, is often used as part of other explosive materials or for its own purpose in other ammunition. Tetryl is extremely

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Ex-Decatur Man Killed; Five Escape

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sensitive to heat of any kind and once the fire started there was no way to bring it under control. Approximately 4½ hours after the fire started it finally burned itself out when nothing remained but a few charred sticks and twisted metal equipment.

A TRUCK AND SMALL "dinky" type box-car adjacent to the building were also burned in the fire, which was still red hot at 4:30 p. m.

Lee, employed an a dryer helper, lived at 2626 Prairie St., Decatur, Ill., before moving to Coal City recently.

He has a wife, Irene, of Coal City, and two sons, Roy, of Wilmington and Lawrence of Manhattan.

The remains were taken to the Reeves funeral home, Wilmington. Funeral arrangements were incomplete at noon today.